



SEGRA 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention News Editors / Chief of Staff
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

REGIONS TO DRIVE NATIONAL OUTLOOK

Serendipity has landed regional and rural Australia ringside seats in the next government, raising hopes of a **radical redirection of governance for the regions.**

Championing a 'new take' on regional management is Brisbane-based think-tank, SEGRA (Sustainable Economic Growth for Regional Australia).

"Currently policy for industry sectors, such as agriculture or mining, contributes a lot more to our national outlook than policy for regions. SEGRA believes this could be turned on its head," said SEGRA founding Director, Ms Kate Charters currently convening **SEGRA 2010 conference for Townsville 19 - 21 October.**

Established in 1997, the group has galvanized the voice of regional development professionals, academics, businesses and those passionate about the fortunes of country, coastal and remote regions of Australia.

"The regions need a more sophisticated approach than we've seen," said Ms Charters.

REGIONS TO DRIVE NATIONAL OUTLOOK (continued)

“Regional policy needs to reflect a national outlook and goals for that integrate at a national level. Responding to individual regions and or sectors such as agriculture and mining, water or energy alone will not produce the best outcomes for regions, nor does it prepare Australia for the future that takes climate change, projected global food demands and the international implications of the rise of Asia and India into account.”

Ms Charters argues one-off projects and programs can ultimately be expensive band-aids where a multi-disciplined, cross sectoral policies directed at regionalism would result in far more valuable and progressive outcomes. “Australians deserve to have decision about their regions made as close to the point of implementation as possible, to reflect the priorities of their communities and to ensure services are flexible and respond to their needs. Service models that work in Sydney are not necessarily going to work in Katherine. Delivering consistent policy outcomes does not mean universally uniform program implementation strategies.”

“Do we want people living in country regions or not?

This should be the baseline from which public policy springs. If not, consideration needs to be given to governing a country that is essentially hollow,” said Ms Charters.

“At present, it is death by a thousand cuts, and regions that are strategically desirable and viable are forced to limp along without the financial backbone that should be provided by government.

“Inadequate monetary frameworks currently in use are never going to finance appropriate infrastructure for regions. Fly-in fly-out mining operations are often not socially desirable, but mining companies making commercially motivated decisions to invest in regions, should not be relied upon to replace adequate governance.”

REGIONS TO DRIVE NATIONAL OUTLOOK (continued)

The SEGRA conference will explore a raft of issues impacting regional Australia including population policy, innovative local council alliances, food and water security, among many others at the upcoming conference.

For a full conference program visit www.segra.com.au

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